

Title: The Burning of Trinsic

Author: Japheth of Trinsic

'Twas a sight to
see, the sunlight
falling lightly on the
sandstone walls of
Trinsic 'pon a
morning in spring.

Children ran along
the parapets and
walkways, their
laughter and running
providing music to the
daybreak, despite
their oft-ragged
clothing.

And I was one of
those young ones,
letting my joy rise
up to the skies.

Little did we all
know of the darker
days that would lie
ahead, for we were
too young.

Had we but gained
access to the quiet
councils held in the
Paladin tower as it
faced the sea,
councils lit by
candlelight and
worry, we would
have learned more of
the fears of
imminent attack from
the forest, where
foul creatures born
of dank caves and
darkness were
marauding ever more
often into the lands
around Trinsic's
moat.

But we were
children! The
parapets and the moat
were places to play,
not stout defenses,
and we gave no

thought to the necessities that must have required their construction.

We used to reach the sheltered orchards on the lee side of the parapet walls, where the southern river cut through the city, by swimming across the water.

The rich folk who lived in the great manses there would shout from their windows and shake their fists, for we would run through their gardens and tear up the delicate foxgloves and orfleurs with our unshod dirty feet. Then we would dive into the water and splash merrily to the fruit trees.

The southern river lazily slid under the an ungated arch in the mighty wall, and we would lay on the grassy bank and watch it gurgle by the lily pads.

That spring that pleasant spot became the doorway through which our city of Trinsic let in the monstrous deformed humanoids that savaged us. I lay upon that grassy bank and watched them wade in, their coarse hair wet and matted, algae and muck festooning their wild brows.

They caught sight of a quicksilver girl with bright blond hair and lively eyes. Her name was Leyla, and that spring I had held

fond dreams of
holding her hand and
sharing flavored ice
while dangling our
feet off the small
bridge by Smugglers
Gate.

And I said nothing
when they caught
her, and did not cry
out when they
dragged her off
through that breach in
our wall, and did not
warn the city when I
saw the helmeted orc
captains call the
charge upon the
mansions.

Blame me not, for
I was but a child, and
one who hid in the
branches of the peach
trees, all a-tremble
whilst I watched the
smoke rise from Sean
the tailor's, and fire
lash out at the roof of
witchy Eleanor's
tavern.

To this day I have
had no word of
Leyla, and to this
day the smell of
burning wood can
conjure terrible
dreams. Yet with the
eyes of adulthood, 'tis
possible to examine
the flaws in the
defense of Trinsic on
that fateful day, and
the reasons why our
walls are now
double-thick, and
why our buildings
are now built as
fortresses within a
somber fortified city.

While I can look
out from the top of
the new Paladin
tower, and spy the
mighty white sails
across the barrier
island, and can
descri the small
hollow south of the

city where gypsies
are wont to camp, I
can also envision the
city as it might be
burning, and I bless
the bargain we made:
space for safety,
grace for sturdiness,
and wood for stone.

Whilst I live, I
shall not see Trinsic
burn, and no more
cries of little girls
will haunt the sleep
of our fair citizens.

- Japheth, Paladin
Guildmaster of the
City of Trinsic